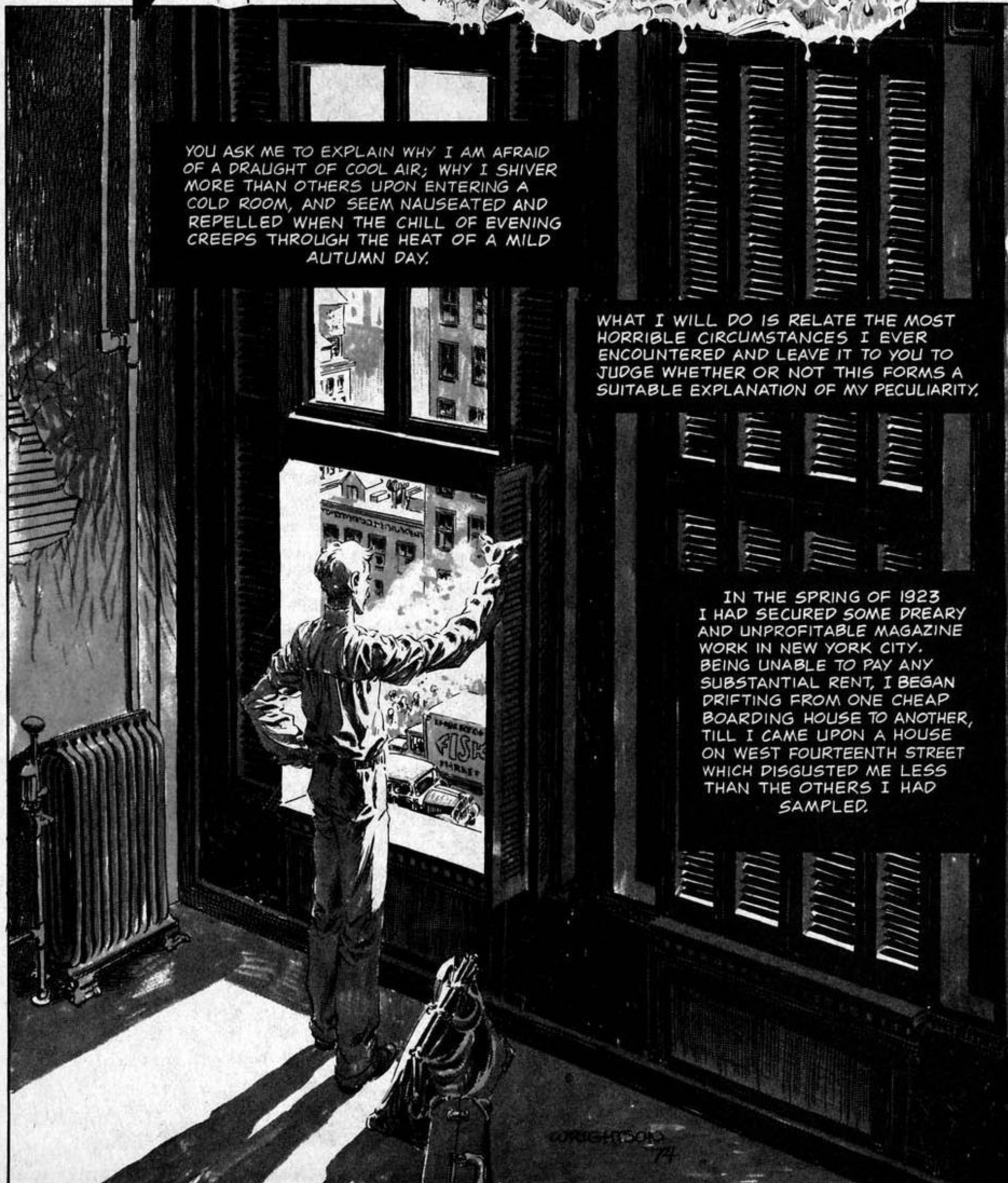




HAVE I GOT
A SPECIAL TREAT
FOR ALL YOU GHOUL
GOURMETS. HERE'S THE
FIRST INSTALLMENT OF
BERNI WRIGHTSON'S
NEW SERIES, **CLASSICS**
OF HORROR! THIS
FIRST ADAPTATION
IS...

H.P. LOVECRAFT'S



YOU ASK ME TO EXPLAIN WHY I AM AFRAID
OF A DRAUGHT OF COOL AIR; WHY I SHIVER
MORE THAN OTHERS UPON ENTERING A
COLD ROOM, AND SEEM NAUSEATED AND
REPELLED WHEN THE CHILL OF EVENING
CREEPS THROUGH THE HEAT OF A MILD
AUTUMN DAY.

WHAT I WILL DO IS RELATE THE MOST
HORRIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES I EVER
ENCOUNTERED AND LEAVE IT TO YOU TO
JUDGE WHETHER OR NOT THIS FORMS A
SUITABLE EXPLANATION OF MY PECULIARITY.

IN THE SPRING OF 1923
I HAD SECURED SOME DREARY
AND UNPROFITABLE MAGAZINE
WORK IN NEW YORK CITY.
BEING UNABLE TO PAY ANY
SUBSTANTIAL RENT, I BEGAN
DRIFTING FROM ONE CHEAP
BOARDING HOUSE TO ANOTHER,
TILL I CAME UPON A HOUSE
ON WEST FOURTEENTH STREET
WHICH DISGUSTED ME LESS
THAN THE OTHERS I HAD
SAMPLED.

WRIGHTSON
74

THE ROOM ABOVE MINE WAS OCCUPIED BY A DR. MUÑOZ, WHO, MY SPANISH LANDLADY INFORMED ME, WAS "TOO SEEK FOR DOCTAIR HEEMSELF," CANNOT GET EXCITE OR WARM,,, NEVAIR LEAVES HEES ROOMS,,, KEEPS HEEMSELF COOL ALL THE TIME WITH HEES REFRIGERATE MACHINE."



...INDEED, FROM THE CEILING OF MY KITCHEN CAME A SOFT AND CONSTANT, BUT NEVER ANNOYING HUM FROM WHAT WAS OBVIOUSLY A GASOLINE POWERED ENGINE ON THE FLOOR ABOVE.

ANY QUESTION AS TO THE SUBSTANCE USED TO COOL SO LARGE AN AREA WAS ANSWERED ONE DAY WHEN I WAS DISTRACTED FROM MY WORK BY A LOUD SPATTERING ON THE FLOOR...!



THE DRIPPING SOON STOPPED AND I FORGOT ALL ABOUT DR. MUÑOZ AND THE STRANGE HAPPENINGS IN THE ROOM ABOVE ME, UNTIL I SUFFERED A HEART ATTACK WHILE WRITING IN MY ROOM...!



...SOMEHOW, I DRAGGED MYSELF UP THE STAIRS...



...THE DOOR OPENED... A RUSH OF COOL AIR GREETED ME... AND I FAINTED IN DR. MUÑOZ' ARMS...!



I CAME TO ON AN ANTIQUE SOFA IN A RICHLY APPOINTED APARTMENT. THE PAINTINGS, THE SCULPTURES, THE MELLOW BOOKSHELVES ALL BESPOKE A GENTLEMAN'S **STUDY**, DISTURBINGLY OUT OF PLACE IN THIS SQUALID BOARDING HOUSE...!

AH!
YOU'VE COME
AROUND
FEELING
BETTER?

W-WHY
YES...BUT
IT'S SO
COLD...!

MY APOLOGIES FOR
YOUR DISCOMFORT, BUT
THE LOW TEMPERATURE
IS ABSOLUTELY NEC-
CESSARY, I ASSURE
YOU...!

IN FACT, A
HIGHER TEMPER-
ATURE WOULD PROVE
FATAL! I WAS STRICKEN
WITH A RARE **DISEASE**
EIGHTEEN YEARS AGO.
MY REGIMEN HAS
INCLUDED CON-
STANT **COLD**.

THE COLD, ALONG WITH
CERTAIN CHEMICAL BATHS...
ALL REMEDIES OF MY OWN
DEVICE...HAVE HELPED KEEP
MY MALADIES IN ABEYANCE.
BUT IT IS MY **WILL**...

...THE
POWER OF
MY **MIND**
THAT AC-
COUNTS FOR
THE **REAL**
MIRACLE
OF MY
RECOVERY!

WILLPOWER
ALONE IS SUF-
FICIENT TO SUS-
TAIN LIFE, EVEN
IN THE ABSENCE
OF CERTAIN
ORGANS.

I MAY EVEN,
SOME DAY, TEACH
YOU TO LIVE... OR AT
LEAST POSSESS SOME
KIND OF CONSCIOUS
EXISTENCE... WITH-
OUT ANY HEART
AT ALL!

DR. MUÑOZ'S SKILLFUL MINISTRATIONS
RELIEVED...I DARE SAY, EFFECTED A
COMPLETE **CURE**...OF MY HEART CON-
DITION. I SOON BECAME A DEVO-
TEE OF THE GIFTED RECLUSE...

MANY WERE THE TIMES WE TALKED, LONG INTO
THE NIGHT, OF HIS RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENTS
IN MIND OVER MATTER, SUSPENDED ANIMATION,
AND ARTIFICIAL PRESERVATION...!

BUT, AS THE WEEKS PASSED, I OBSERVED, WITH REGRET, THAT MY NEW FRIEND'S HEALTH WAS DETERIORATING....!

COME IN,
COME IN... FORGIVE
ME FOR NOT RISING...
FEEL SO WEAK....!

WE RE-ADJUSTED HIS COOLING SYSTEM TO
PRODUCE EVEN LOWER TEMPERATURES... BETWEEN
THIRTY-FOUR AND FORTY DEGREES!

HE DEVELOPED A PENCHANT FOR POWERFUL
EGYPTIAN INCENSE AND SPICES TILL HIS ROOMS
SMELLED LIKE A PHAROAH'S PALACE....!

HIS ATTITUDE GREW PROGRESSIVELY
GRIM AND MORBID... HE SPOKE OF DEATH
INCESSANTLY AND CURSED THESE FRIGID
ROOMS THAT WERE HIS PRISON....!

AND WHEN I DELICATELY
SUGGESTED HIS
MAKING SOME SORT OF
FUNERAL PLANS...

**FUNERAL
PLANS?**

ARRANGEMENTS
FOR **DEATH**? MY
GOOD MAN! SURELY
YOU **JEST**!

HA HA HA

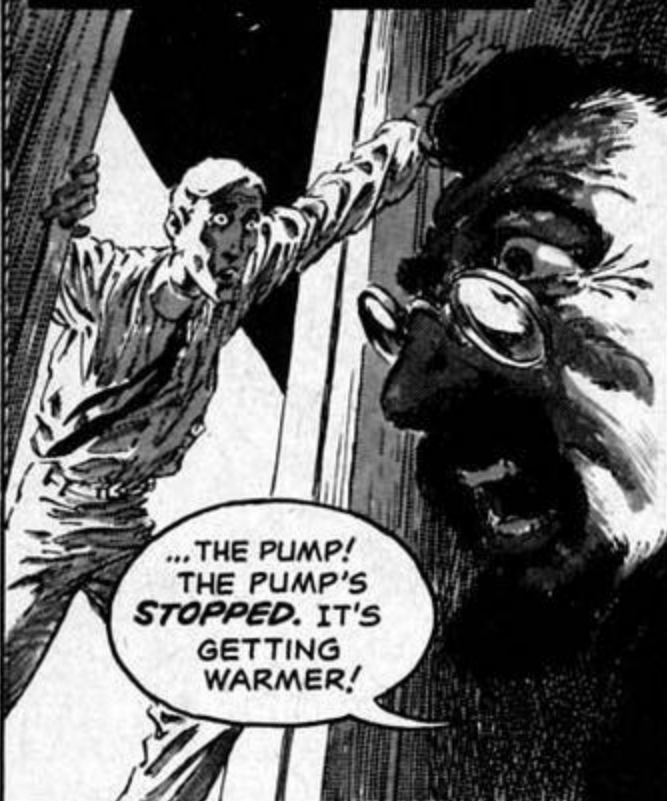
ME...
DIE? OH...
HA-HA-HA...
WHAT A FINE
JOKE!

YET HIS WILL AND DRIVING FORCE
WAXED RATHER THAN WANED, AND HE
CONTINUED ABOUT HIS AFFAIRS WITH
RENEWED PURPOSE. BUT EVEN
SO, HIS PHYSICAL ASPECT
BELIED THE VIGOR OF HIS
ACTIONS AND HE GREW MORE
PALID AND SKELETAL WITH
EACH PASSING DAY....!

THEN, ONE NIGHT,
I WAS JARRED
FROM WORK BY A
FRANTIC THUMPING
ON THE FLOOR
ABOVE ME....!

**T-DUMP!
T-DUP!**

I RUSHED UP THE STAIRS
AND BURST INTO THE ROOM...!



...THE PUMP!
THE PUMP'S
STOPPED. IT'S
GETTING
WARMER!

UPON EXAMINING THE
MACHINE, WE DISCOVERED THAT
ONE OF THE PISTONS WAS BROKEN.



IT MUST
BE FIXED!
QUICKLY!

I LEFT AND RETURNED WITH A
MECHANIC FROM A NEARBY ALL-
NIGHT GARAGE...!



'S'NO USE...
IT'S GOTTA BE
REPLACED... SHOPS'RE
CLOSED TILL EIGHT
INNA MORNING.

OH GOD,
NO!

DR. MUNOZ RAGED AND CURSED
VIOLENTLY FOR SEVERAL HOURS,
TILL A SEVERE SPASM SENT HIM
SCREAMING, HANDS COVERING
HIS EYES, INTO THE BATHROOM.



HE APPEARED
AT THE DOOR,
MOMENTS
LATER, HIS
FACE TIGHTLY
BANDAGED...!

BRING
ICE... LOTS
OF IT...
QUICKLY!

I RAIDED THE ALL-NIGHT
DRUG-STORES AND CAFETERIAS
FOR ALL THE ICE THEY
COULD SPARE...!



LEAVE...
IT THERE...
BRING
MORE!

EACH TIME I RETURNED,
THE PREVIOUS LOAD HAD
DISAPPEARED BEHIND THE
LOCKED BATHROOM DOOR
AND MY HARRIED KNOCKINGS
AND CALLINGS WERE
ANSWERED WITH...



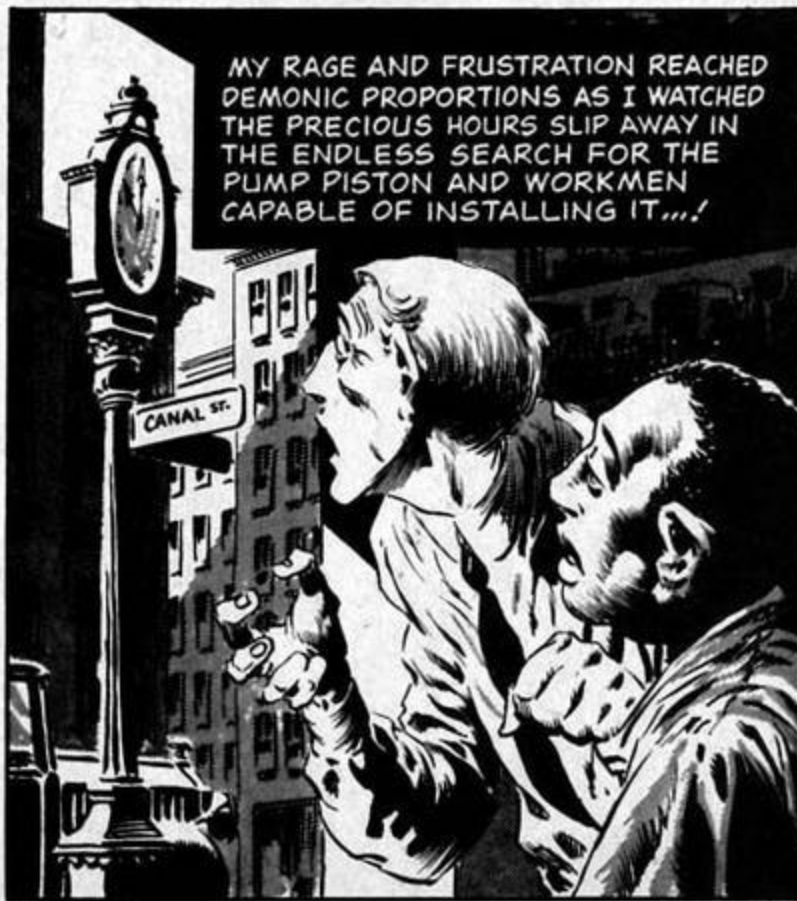
MORE!

... MORE
ICE!

AT EIGHT O'CLOCK I LEFT TO
FIND A SHOP THAT CARRIED A
SUITABLE REPLACEMENT
FOR THE BROKEN PISTON.
ON THE CORNER OF EIGHTH
AVENUE, I FOUND A MAN
WHO, AFTER MUCH PLEADING
AND EMPTYING OF POCKETS,
AGREED TO KEEP DR. MUÑOZ
SUPPLIED WITH ICE
TILL I RETURNED...!



MY RAGE AND FRUSTRATION REACHED
DEMONIC PROPORTIONS AS I WATCHED
THE PRECIOUS HOURS SLIP AWAY IN
THE ENDLESS SEARCH FOR THE
PUMP PISTON AND WORKMEN
CAPABLE OF INSTALLING IT...!



CANAL ST.

IT WASN'T UNTIL ONE-THIRTY THAT I
FINALLY ARRIVED
AT MY BOARDING
HOUSE.
UPON OPENING
THE HALL DOOR,
AN INDESCRIBABLE
STENCH SEARED
MY NOSTRILS...!

I PUSHED MY WAY PAST THE TENANTS CROWDED ON
THE STAIRS, WHO TOLD ME THE MAN I HAD HIRED FLED
SCREAMING AFTER HIS SECOND DELIVERY OF ICE...! I
TRIED DR. MUÑOZ' DOOR AND FOUND IT LOCKED FROM INSIDE...!



WITH THE HELP OF SEVERAL
STRONG MEN I FORCED THE DOOR
OPEN AND STEPPED INTO THE ROOM
...THERE WAS NO SOUND SAVE A
NAMELESS SORT OF SLOW,
THICK DRIPPING...!

FROM THE OPEN BATH-
ROOM DOOR LED A DARK
SLIMY TRAIL...!

I FOLLOWED IT THROUGH THE HALL
TO THE DESK WHERE IT SEEMED TO
ACCUMULATE IN
A TERRIBLE
LITTLE POOL...!

ON THE DESK WAS A LETTER,
SCRAWLED BY AN AWFUL BLIND
HAND, HIDEOUSLY SMEARED AS
THOUGH BY THE VERY CLAWS THAT
TRACED THE LAST HURRIED WORDS.

THEN THE TRAIL LED TO THE
COUCH AND ENDED UNUTTERABLY...!



...the man
and ran away
Warmer every minute
and the tissues can't
last.

There was a
gradual deterioration I had
not foreseen. But it had
to be done this way—
artificial preservation!

For, you see,
I died that time
eighteen years ago—